6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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pit, then goes to the western gate of the enclosure, and puts down her plate for an instant while she makes profound salaam to the goddess ere going away. 796 564

And now the procession starts out from the temple, issuing from the northern gate, and for a moment confronts a being so strange that he demands description. Of the many familiar demons of the Malayalis the two most intimate are "Kuttichchâttan" and "Gulikan," who are supposed to have assisted Kâli (who is scarcely the Kâli of Brâhmanism by the by) in overcoming the Asura, and on the occasion of this festival these two demons dance before her. "Gulikan" is represented by the Vannân and "Kuttichchâttan" by the Manûtan who have been mentioned already, and who are under like restrictions with the nine Tîyans. I saw poor "Gulikan" being made up, the operation occupying five or six hours or more before his appearance. I asked who he was and was told he was "a devil." He looked mild enough; but then his "make up" had just begun. He was lying flat on the ground close by the northern entrance of the enclosure, where presently he was to dance, a man painting his face to make it hideous and frightful. This done, his hair was dressed; large bangles were put on his arms, covering them almost completely from the shoulder to the wrist; his head and neck was swathed and decorated; a wooden platform arrangement from which hung a red ornamented skirt was fastened to his hips; there was fastened to his back an elongated Prince of Wales's feathers arrangement (made of plank) the top of which reached five feet above his head; and he was made to look like nothing human. Kuttichchâttan was treated in much the same manner. 796 776 536

As the procession issues from the northern gate of the temple where it is joined by the elephants, Gulikan stands in the northern entrance of the enclosure (which he cannot enter), facing it, and a halt is made for three minutes, while Gulikan dances. The poor old man who represented this fearful being, grotesquely terrible in his wonderful metamorphosis, must have been extremely glad when his three minutes' dance, preparation for which occupied all the afternoon, was concluded, for the mere weight and uncomfortable arrangement of his paraphernalia must have been extremely exhausting. It was with difficulty that he moved at all, let alone dance.

The procession passes round by east, where, at the entrance of the enclosure, Kuttichchâttan gives his dance,

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only training was the training of the memory, and the learned pedagogue never bestowed a thought on cultivating the thinking powers or the originality of his pupils. But this type of school and school-master is fast disappearing under the modern regime of elementary schools.

Next in importance to the school-master is the Kaniyan, an indispensable factor in the affairs and ceremonies of the village.[1]

Then come the artisan classes whose services are necessary in the construction of houses, and the making of implements of agriculture. They were paid for their work either in kind or in coin.

The other men of importance in the village economic life were the physician, the village washerman, and the village barber. The village physician was a man of parts; for, not only did he tend the sick and the ailing, but also cast out devils from persons possessed, and with the aid of well prepared charms guarded them from the effects of the evil eye. The village washermen were of the Veluthédan and the Mannán caste. The services of the former were always requisitioned when people wished to become free from pollution, an act the omission of which leads to outcasting.

The village barber is another indispensable factor in the village ceremony and is employed for the shaving before all ceremonies. His privileges cannot be encroached upon by his own caste-men from other villages.

The village organisation above described is preserved to a certain extent even now and most probably the Kaniyan's profession will survive all other relics of Hindu institutions, as his services are considered to be of essential importance in matters of every day life.

Village pastimes.

The ordinary games pursued by the young men of the village are the foot-ball matches, *Attakalam*, *Kayyámkali*, and *Kaikottikkali* (a favourite circular dance of the women), *Uzhinjál* and others, while cards and chess are common enough on festive occasions. Cock-fighting is an interesting pastime among the lower classes.

The most important of the village pastimes are the dramatic performances, a description of which is given in the following pages. The drama in Malabar sprang into being in

1. Vide my account of the Kaniyans, Vol. I, Chap. XI, pages 190-93.

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536 538 the early ages, and *Krishnáttam* and *Rámanáttam* are among the earliest productions in the Malayalam literature. The origin of the former is interesting. A pious devotee, Vilvamangalattu Swámiyar, by name, resided in the temple of Guruváyúr in the Chaughat Taluk, which belonged to the Zamorin of Calicut. One of the Zamorins, while on a pilgrimage to the temple, asked the pious Swamiyar to show him the person of the God Krishna. On his wish being gratified, he was so much attracted by the handsome countenance of the divine 'Child God' that the Raja attempted to detain him by catching him by the head. But, alas, he vanished, leaving in the hands of the Raja a single peacock's feather which had adorned the crown on his head. The Raja who was a great scholar determined to write a drama which would contain the life of Krishna—from his incarnation to his departure to heaven—and *Krishnáttam* was the outcome of that resolve. This play, which is seldom 536 acted outside Calicut, takes eight days for its performance beginning as a rule, each night, at 10 p. m. and lasting until 3 a. m.

The cost of a night's performance is 64 fanams (eighteen rupees, four annas, and seven pies). Once it is said that when the actors went to Tripunathura, the residence of His Highness the Raja of Cochin, who had a night's performance in his palace, *Kamsavadham* (death of Kamsa, an *Asura* king, who was the maternal uncle of Krishna) was the play selected for the night; and to try the strength of the actor Krishna, a tusker who was brought to the stage was caught hold of by the tusks and killed. The play was never thereafter sent either to Cochin or Travancore.

The other play which is equal in importance to the one just described is the *Ramanáttam*, and was composed by the *Kottarakkara Tampuran*, a distant relative of the then ruling sovereign of Travancore. Once this prince asked the Zamorin of Calicut to send his actors for a few nights' performance in his own palace; but his request was refused on the plea that the prince as well as the southerners generally, were not able to appreciate so important and erudite a drama. This led to the composition of a play by the prince himself.

Plays, as a general rule, are not very popular at present, perhaps with the exception of the one kind which is now being

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played. There are also other kinds of plays, which are called *Attakkathas* (plays in which the incidents are represented by dancing and gestures) in Travancore, and *Kathakalis* in Malabar. Many additions to these were made by different scholars in different times, and they now number about fifty-six, most of which are now being acted. Many or all of them possess a high order of literary excellence, and are, year after year, prescribed as vernacular text books for University Examinations.

Personal adornment of the actors.—In the beginning the actors had no regular dress as at present, nor was there any curtain dividing the audience from the stage. The only theatrical property known in those days were figures clumsily drawn upon the bark of the areca palm and attached to the bodies of the actors, while the orchestra consisted only of the *maddalam*, a kind of drum. But innovations were soon introduced, and the first of these were those introduced by the Tirúr or Bettattunad Raja.

It may not be out of place here to give a short sketch of a day's performance as it is to-day. A travelling company, which usually consists of twelve actors, four singers, and four musicians who form an "orchestra with drums (*maddalam* and *chenda*), gongs (*chengalam*) and cymbals (*elathálam*)", is invited and lodged in a house near which they are to give the performance. In the morning they are given gingelly oil for an oil-bath, and are then served with rice, *kanji*, and *pappadam*. This forms their breakfast. After it, they retire to sleep till about four o'clock in the afternoon. At five o'clock they are treated to a sumptuous dinner, and half an hour later begins, by beat of drums and other musical instruments of the company, a formal announcement to the villagers in the neighbourhood that a play is to be performed that night.

The stage is nothing more than a crude wooden structure slightly raised from the ground. The drop curtain consists usually of pieces of cloth sewn together and the figure of a god or an animal drawn thereon. The auditorium consists of mats strewn on the floor for the audience to sit on, while two bell-metal lamps, containing cocoanut-oil and wicks of rolled cotton cloth, are the only means of lighting the theatre. Sometimes to add to the solemnity of the occasion conch shells are

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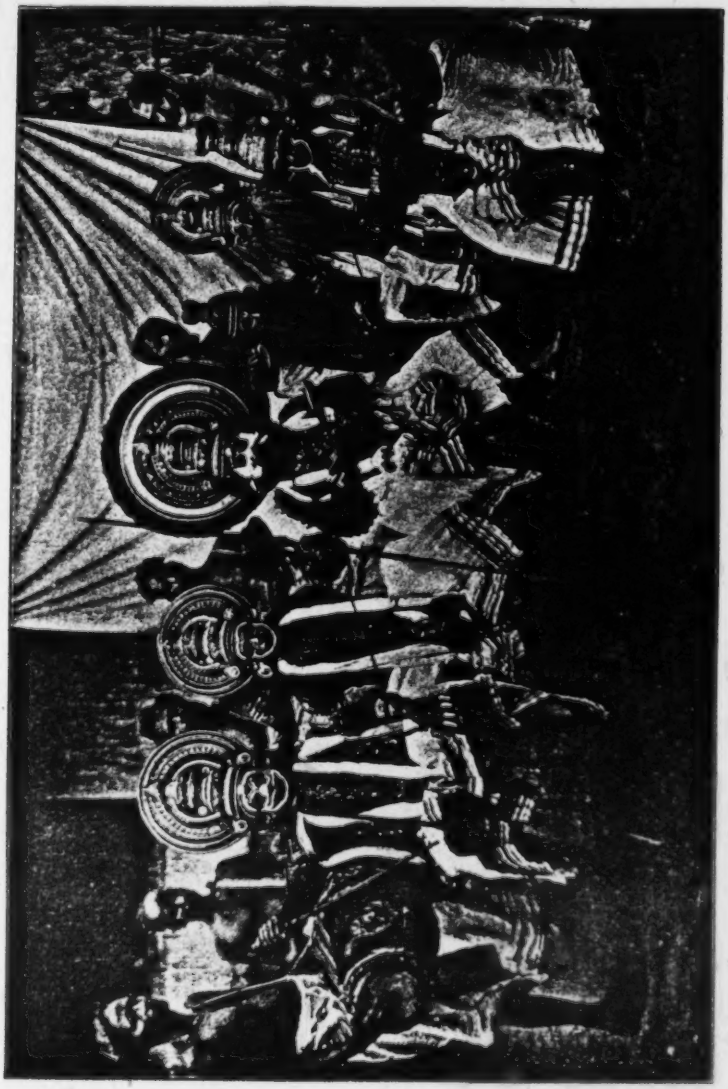

CHARACTERS OF MALABAR DRAMA (KATHA KALI).

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536 intermittently blown. Such are the crude theatrical properties which the actor has to face.

[533] At about eight o'clock begins the *Thódayam purapád*, consisting of songs which are meant to initiate the audience into [782] the mysteries of the plot. But this takes place behind the drop curtain, which has not yet been drawn up. Next comes the *Vandanaslókam*—a song in propitiation of some particular god—and then begins the play. The actors perform only by means of dumb-show, and the music is provided by the singers who, though invisible, are close at hand. All changes of thought, feelings, and emotions are conveyed by means of gestures of which there are said to be sixty-four different kinds, and in the commingling of these, lies the skill of the actor. Inhuman and unchivalrous acts, such as chopping off the noses and breasts of women, are usually enacted behind the scenes; though, in certain cases, these are made realistic by the characters to be victimised wearing false noses and breasts. [435] It is not until the dawn of day that the play ends. The cost of a night's performance is only about fifteen rupees, while the cost of all the stock in trade is often less than 400 rupees.

536 A special innovation in this direction was made by the 176 Valia Kovil Tampurán of Travancore and others who translated a few of the most important Sanskrit dramas. They introduced a real improvement in the construction of the stage and scenery, as also in the mode of dress, the style of music, and the method of acting, all of which were changes for the better. Dramatic companies were organised in many places where the plays were acted. They were at first very popular, but most of them disappeared as they did not play; but yet poets and versifiers still continue their work of producing plays for the stage.

536 *Mohiniydttam.*—This is an institution, very much like the nautch of the East Coast. A leader (*Nettuvan*) obtains the service of two or three young girls of low birth and trains them for the performance. He takes the girls from house to house, gets a paltry allowance for each day's performance, and thus makes a living. The performance is usually acted at night, when the girls, dressed in the gaudy attire, are led by [554] the *Nettuvan* in an amorous dance. This is an abominable institution, and the women who are thus rented out are looked

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upon with contempt. It must be noted that they live separately, having little or nothing in common with the other classes, and that the institution is dying a silent and natural death.

Songs.— There have been very many songs current among the Nayars even from a very remote period; and they are chiefly composed and sung in honour of deities, and are mostly prayers addressed to them. A translation of these is not here attempted, for they lose much of their beauty, but the following, however, are the most important of them:—

Bhadrakali Pattu:—These are songs which are sung in honour of Káli, and are supposed to have been composed by the Sudras of Palghat long before the Malayalam era. Certain dramatic songs also appear to have been composed about the same time, and refer to the deities on the hills as well as to the kings of the period. They are sung in towns and villages, between Anamala and Trichur in the east, and the Walayar forests on the other side. The ancient name of these localities was Cheranad, and it was the first place to be occupied by people, when Kerala was a marshy tract. As evidence of this, remains of houses are still to be seen at the foot of the hills. In a place of such historic importance were composed and sung these songs, which are so full of the ideas of the Vedanta and Yoga philosophies, and which give a clue to the nature of the people who once lived there. There is also another variety of songs referring to *Dárikavadham*, (murder of the demon Dárikan), and they are sung by a class of men called the *Kurippans*. There are also other old songs such as the *Sásta pattu* (songs in honour of Sásta).

Ganapati pattu (songs in honour of Ganapati) and serpent songs:—Among the old songs, those referring to agriculture, and composed during the third century of the Malayalam era, occupy a prominent place, and the agriculturists of the northern parts of the State even to-day follow the precepts laid down in these songs. But excepting, the song commemorating the deeds of *Meppayil Kunji Othenan*, the Robinhood of North Malabar, there are no songs which sing of the deeds of brave men.

The chief festivals.—(1). *Onam*:—This is an important national festival, which falls in the second half of August or the first half of September, and is celebrated in commemoration of Mahábali, an *Asura* king, whose reign is believed

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala
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114 *dbang Nor-pu*), who had already brought us to Kyelang from Kulu. Towards the middle of July, with some added personnel recruited from him and placed under the authority of his daughter, Dölma (*sGrol-ma*), we left for Rupchu and Ladak. (For an account of this journey, see *Chevauchée tibétaine*, by the same author, Fernand Nathan editeur, Paris, 1958.)

[192] [196] [535] My first stage was the Shar Shu monastery, near Kolong, where the Wazir of Lahul and his family resided. Here we attended the annual masked dance of the lamas, and spent the night at Thakur Partap Chand's fort-like castle. It was here, too, that I met the *goba* of the nomads of Rupchu; he was introduced to me by Mangal Chand, alias *amchi* Tashi Dawa, and I received an invitation to go to Korzok.

The next day, we continued to Patseo or Dozam (*rDo-Zam*) as it is called in Tibetan, and camped with Tsewang Norbu, chief of the Gyakar Kham-pa, and his people for a few days until we received the pack ponies and men which I had ordered from him.

This gave us the opportunity to attend the local fair and annual market here and to see for ourselves in what manner goods from the nomads further north were bought or exchanged for other products by the sedentary Lahulis. We also attended a local show given by travelling entertainers from Spiti, in which they performed the ancient ceremony of breaking a large stone on the chest of a man. [536]

The climb up over the Baralatcha pass (16,147 ft.) was strenuous, but we were soon over it, and travelling on the flat Lingti plain, along the banks of the Yunan river. We reached the Ser chu and then the Tsarab chu, which we forded to reach Spiti. A short distance further on, we crossed the south-eastern boundary of Kashmir, and continued our progress now through that State.

A few days later, we turned in a south-easterly direction so as to reach the shores of the lake called Tso (*mTs'ho*) Morari (this is the name on the map, but I heard locally that it should be more correctly *Moriri*), where the *goba* resided.

We arrived at our destination towards the beginning of August, not without difficulty because we had had to cross some very high passes, one of them the Lagnyal-la (20,600 ft.). Our caravan, both men and horses, suffered from the unusual altitude and, for some days, were quite unable to go on. But finally, we descended to relatively more reasonable heights and were received, some distance away from where we were going to stay, by the *goba* and his nephew. They were both relatives of the Karpa house in Lahul.

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588 184 (574) system prevails, all members of such families, both male and female, are also provided with meals. On the third day, the villagers are again entertained to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding, and on the fourth day the girls are taken out in procession for worship at the nearest temple amidst tom-toms and shouting. After this a feast is held, at which friends, relatives, and villagers are given a rich meal. With the usual distribution of pān-supāri, sandal and flowers, the invited guests depart. (431) Presents, chiefly in money, are made to the eldest male member of the family by friends and relatives and villagers, and with this the ceremony closes. From the (787) time of fixing the first pole for the pandal to the tying of the tāli, the village astrologer is in attendance on all ceremonial occasions, as he has to pronounce the auspicious moment for the performance of each item. During (536) the four days of the marriage, entertainments, such as Kathakali drama or Ottan Tullal, are very common. When a family can ill-afford to celebrate the ceremony on any grand scale, the girls are taken to the nearest temple, or to the illam of a Nambūdri, if they happen to belong to sub-divisions attached to illams, and the tāli (735) is tied with little or no feasting and merriment. In the northern taluks, the very poor people sometimes tie the tāli before the Trikkakkarappan on the Tiruvonam day."

An interesting account of the tāli-kettu ceremony is given by Duarte Barbosa, who writes as follows.* "After they are ten or twelve years old or more, their mothers perform a marriage ceremony for them in this manner. They advise the relations and friends that they may come to do honour to their daughters, and they

* *Op. cit.*

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demons dance before her. Gulikan is represented by 796
the Vannān and Kuttichchāttan by the Manūtan who 776
have been already mentioned, and who are under like
restrictions with the nine Tiyans. I saw poor Gulikan 796
being made up, the operation occupying five or six 776
hours or more before his appearance. I asked who 536
he was, and was told he was a devil. He looked mild 788
enough, but then his make-up had just begun. He was
lying flat on the ground close by the north-east entrance
of the enclosure, where presently he was to dance, a man
painting his face to make it hideous and frightful. This
done, the hair was dressed; large bangles were put
on his arms, covering them almost completely from the
shoulder to the wrist; and his head and neck were
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and uncomfortable arrangement of his paraphernalia
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difficulty that he could move at all, let alone dance.
The procession passes round by east, where, at the
entrance of the enclosure, Kuttichchāttan gives his

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dance, round by south to the westward, and, leaving the enclosure, proceeds to a certain banyan tree, under which is a high raised platform built up with earth and stones. Preceding the procession at a distance of fifty yards are the nine men of the Tiyan caste mentioned already, carrying kalasams on their heads, and a crowd of women of the same caste, each one carrying a pewter plate, larger than the plates used when encircling the fire pit, on which are rice, etc., and the burning wick as before. The plate and its contents are on this occasion, as well as before, called talapōli. I could not make out that anything in particular is done at the banyan tree, and the procession soon returns to the temple, the nine men and the Tiyan women following, carrying their kalasams and talapōli. On the way, a number of cocks are given in sacrifice by people under a vow. In the procession are a number of devil-dancers, garlanded with white flowers of the pagoda tree mixed with red, jumping, gesticulating, and shouting, in an avenue of the crowd in front of the elephant bearing the sword. The person under a vow holds the cock towards one of these devil-dancers, who, never ceasing his gyrations and contortions, presently seizes its head, wrings it off, and flings it high in the air. The vows which are fulfilled by this rude decapitation of cocks have been made in order to bring about cure for some ailment. The procession passes through the temple yard from west to east, and proceeds half a mile to a banyan tree, under which, like the other, there is a high raised platform. When passing by the temple, the Tiyan women empty the contents of their plates in the fire pit as before, and the nine men hand over the arrack in their kalasams to the temple servants. Let me note here the curious distribution of the rice which is heaped in the fire pit.